

Breaking Down the

BARRIERS

Alberta Infrastructure

October 2000

Update

Parking Policy Review



Alberta Infrastructure continues to advance the Parking Placards for Persons with Disabilities Policy review.

In August 2000, a second, revised "Model for Discussion" was distributed to stakeholders for feedback. This revised model incorporates the comments received from stakeholders during the Spring and Summer.

Response to this revised model has been excellent, and the Department expects to have a final version ready in the near future.

Once this has been accomplished, the next step will be to revise procedures and make necessary changes to computer programs in time for implementation next spring or early summer.

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Accessible Taxis in Edmonton

Laidlaw Transit Ltd. (operating as Yellow Cab) terminated their accessible taxi service in Edmonton on July 31, 2000. In the meantime, Yellow Cab continues to provide one accessible taxi cab for Sky Shuttle service to and from the Edmonton Airport, in order to meet its contractual obligations with the airport authority.

A report outlining alternatives for the future of accessible taxis was presented to the City Council's Transportation and Public Works Committee on August 22, 2000. Council requested that the Transportation and Streets Department prepare a plan outlining what roles the city, taxi industry and province should play in providing such service, for presentation at their next meeting on October 24.

In another development, the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission recently issued a ruling calling for the same stakeholders to come up with a solution to this problem within six months.

For more information, please contact:

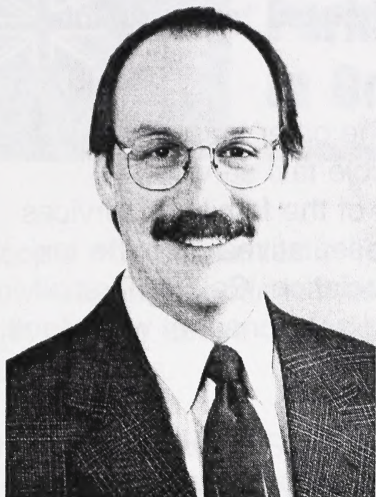
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Profile – Member of the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation

Name: Stephen Hansen

**Occupation: Manager of Accessible
Transportation Services at Calgary
Transit**

How did you become interested in transportation issues?

A number of years ago a position became available working with the City of Calgary on transportation services for people with disabilities. My university education focused on aging, and given that many people who use specialized transportation services are seniors, the position was a good fit.

What is your role on the Barrier Free Committee and why did you become involved?

Officially, I represent the City of Calgary, but informally I see my role as being an advocate for the transportation needs of people with disabilities, as well as to raise issues of concern for municipalities. Transportation is one of the keys to full participation in community life. Therefore, it is important to ensure that there is a range of transportation services, in both urban and rural areas, to meet the needs of people with reduced mobility. From the perspective of a large municipality, there is a need to coordinate transportation services with the delivery of other services. As for the Barrier Free Committee, I've been impressed that it takes a coordinated approach by highlighting the importance of including transportation in planning for new programs and services.



What are the major concerns or issues you have related to accessible transportation?

There are two major challenges – one short term and the other long term. The short-term challenge is re-establishing a viable accessible taxi service in Calgary. Accessible taxis are an important component of the family of services approach to transportation. A group consisting of representatives from the taxi industry, the Taxi Commission, Calgary Handi-Bus Association, Calgary Transit, and individuals with disabilities has been working to find solutions that would see accessible taxis back on city streets.

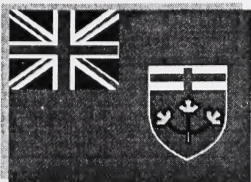
The long-term challenge relates to the ability of municipalities in Alberta to meet the demand for specialized transportation services in the future. Population growth, changing demographics, community-based service delivery, and changing expectations for participation in the community – all are going to significantly increase the demand for accessible fixed-route and specialized transportation services in the near future. We will need to find innovative ways to meet the challenge of increasing demand for service, and the Advisory Committee provides an excellent forum for the sharing of ideas, information and solutions.

Japanese Government Requires Barrier-Free Transport

The Japanese Legislature passed a Barrier-Free Transportation Law on May 10, 2000 to make new transit vehicles, stations, and roads accessible to seniors and persons with disabilities. This pioneering legislation makes Japan the leading nation in Asia in requiring universal design to remove obstacles to passengers with disabilities. The standards require that new buses and rail cars be accessible and that new or remodeled fixed facilities include elevators, escalators, and tactile guideways for mobility or visually impaired passengers. The law, to become effective in November, includes penalties for transit operators who fail to comply.



Source: Accessible Transportation Around the World, June 2000



Parking Placard Enforcement in Ontario

People with disabilities in Toronto, Ontario, have new reason for optimism as they deal with chronic abuse of designated parking stalls.

The Toronto Police Service has launched a new Disabled Liaison Unit, which operates as part of its Parking Enforcement Unit.

The unit was developed in response to both the existing needs of people with disabilities, and the anticipated needs of an aging population.



The purpose of the Disabled Liaison Unit is to engage members of the community with disabilities to work in partnership with the Toronto Police Service, in identifying and developing policing services that are sensitive to the needs of the community.

The unit investigates improper use of disabled permits, fraudulent permits, and parking without permits. It also identifies parking issues and contributes to solutions wherever possible. The unit is also providing sensitivity training to police service members, and raising awareness in the general public.

For more information about the unit, contact Sergeant Brian Keown at (416) 808-6643.

Source: ABILITIES, Issue 44, Fall 2000, pp. 6

Survey of Air Travel Accessibility



Are Canadian airlines and airports giving the travelling public with disabilities the attention they deserve?

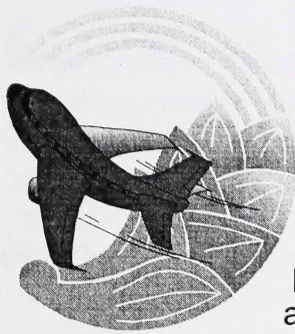
The Canadian Transportation Agency conducted a "Taking Charge of Air Travel" survey at six Canadian airports between May and August this year to determine if they are.

While most Canadians see airports as gateways to travelling enjoyment, they can be intimidating places for travellers with disabilities. The Canadian Transportation Agency is working to ensure that all travellers can take charge of their air travel experience.

The Agency conducted surveys at airports at Ottawa, Halifax, Calgary, Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto between May and August.

Seniors and persons with disabilities were asked to fill out a questionnaire advising whether they felt they





were given access to the kind of service they required to prepare for and take flights with a minimum of obstacles.

The survey dealt with issues such as booking agents' awareness of services and facilities for seniors and persons with disabilities; ease of access to different areas of the airports; readability of flight schedule monitors; clarity of public address announcements; helpfulness of check-in personnel; facilitation of passenger boarding and baggage handling; seating and washroom arrangements; availability of wheelchairs on-board aircraft; and accommodations provided for service animals.

Agency representatives conducted the survey between May and August and distributed more than 4,200 surveys in six airports. By the end of July, almost one-third had been completed and sent in. Many more were expected in August as distribution in Toronto and Montreal had just been completed.

Analysis of the surveys takes place this fall. The "Taking Charge in Air Travel" survey findings will assist the Agency in establishing priorities to eliminate undue barriers for travelling Canadians with disabilities.

Source: Moving Ahead, Summer 2000

Did you know?

Brian Laird, a member of the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation, has been profiled in the recently released book, **Daring to Live: Personal Journeys of Courage and Triumph**. The book is a compilation of true local stories, which provides a living testament to the tenacity and miraculous powers of the human spirit. The book is available at any local bookstore throughout the province.

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